

efficient. For me, this means only one thing: high-speed rail.

I am proud to be a member of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. And I believe it is time to weave this country together, from coast to coast, with a new network of clean, safe high-speed trains. This will create thousands of jobs, serving as a boon to the national economy. It will also save money. Laying track is four times cheaper than building highways, and railroads can transport up to five times as many people. There is no question that high-speed rail will increase the ease and affordability of travel between States. This will bring fresh opportunity to every community, large or small, that touches the new rail lines.

Mr. President, 140 years ago, the great American railway first connected the east coast to the west coast. Rail travel helped give definition to this country. It is an integral part of America's past. And it will be just as important to America's future.

This Transportation bill funds important projects and initiatives like these, all across the country. But it is about more than public transportation. It also helps to lay the groundwork for a renewable energy paradigm. It is a blueprint to create jobs, protect the environment, and save money.

If we pass this legislation, it will be a significant step in the right direction. And if we build upon this progress in the years to come, we can secure a brighter future for ourselves and for our children, because it's not just a matter of dollars and cents, and it's not just about jobs or the environment. It is about all of that, and it is about national security. It is about reducing our dependence on foreign oil. It is about renewable energy, safer modes of transportation, and an electric grid that is more secure and more efficient. This Transportation bill is a piece of that puzzle. It is a great start. So I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting this measure. Let's invest in America's future once again.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that except for the amendments provided for in this agreement, no further amendments be in order to H.R. 3288; that the following be the only first-degree amendments and motion to recommit remaining in order to H.R. 3288; that second-degree amendments which are relevant to the first-degree to which offered be in order but not prior to a vote in relation to the first-degree amendment; that the listed Kyl motion to recommit be

the only motion to recommit in order, except motions to reconsider votes or motions to waive applicable budget points of order; that a managers' amendment that has been cleared by the managers and the leaders also be in order, and that if the amendment is offered, then it be considered and agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; Landrieu amendment No. 2365, which is pending; Vitter amendment No. 2359, pending and as modified; DeMint amendment No. 2410, pending; McCain amendment No. 2403, pending, as modified; Kyl motion to recommit with instructions, pending; that upon disposition of the amendments and the motion to recommit, the substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate then proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that upon passage, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and that the subcommittee and Senators INOUE and COCHRAN be appointed as conferees; further, that if a point of order is raised against the substitute amendment, it be in order for another substitute amendment to be offered, minus the offending provisions but including any amendments which had been agreed to prior to the point of order; that no further amendments be in order; that the new substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the remaining provisions beyond adoption of the substitute amendment remain in effect; that on Thursday, September 17, following a period of morning business, the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 3288 and proceed to vote in relation to the amendments and motion as specified above, with 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled prior to each vote, and that after the first vote in a sequence, the remaining votes be limited to 10 minutes each; further, that the cloture motion be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, with that, I would like all Members to know that what we have just agreed to is the final amendments of this bill. If any Senator would like to speak on any of them, they are welcome to come to the floor to do so this evening. But with this agreement, all those amendments will be voted on tomorrow morning, as will be announced at the end of the session today.

Mr. President, just to let all Senators know, with this agreement, there will be no further rollcall votes tonight.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, if there are no other Senators who wish

to speak on that—I know a number of Senators are waiting to speak in morning business—I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise—and soon will be joined by Senate colleagues, Senators MCCAIN and GRAHAM—to speak about the war in Afghanistan.

For the first time since 9/11, a national debate is underway about the future of our fight in Afghanistan. This is appropriate. Whenever our Nation sends our brave men and women in uniform into harm's way, it is both natural and necessary that we should have a vigorous national conversation about why we are doing so, whether it is necessary for our national security, and what the right strategy is to achieve our objectives. The truth is, we have not had such a debate since the decision was made unanimously to go into Afghanistan after 9/11 to overthrow the Taliban, which had given safe haven to al-Qaida, which planned and trained for the attacks on us in Afghanistan.

The most direct answer to the question of why we are fighting in Afghanistan and why we must succeed there is exactly that: Afghanistan is where the attacks of 9/11 originated, where al-Qaida made its sanctuary under the Taliban, and where the same Taliban is on the offensive today in Afghanistan and has seized the initiative with the clear aim of gaining control of all of Afghanistan, or major parts of it, and once again providing sanctuary for al-Qaida. It remains self-evident to be a clear and vital national interest of the United States to prevent this from happening. It is also because, although Afghanistan may seem geographically remote, we found out on September 11, 2001, in this modern technological world where great spaces are passed over quickly, that it is not remote when it comes to the safety and security of the American people, and Afghanistan is in the heart of a region in which we have critical national interests.

The fact is, Afghanistan and Pakistan are today at the epicenter of global Islamist extremism and terrorism, with which we are at war. This is the test of our age so far as our security is concerned.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it true that yesterday, when we had the hearing with Admiral Mullen for renomination as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and who I think we would all agree has done an outstanding job of serving our

country, it was pretty clear that Admiral Mullen felt a sense of urgency for us to act in Afghanistan because al-Qaida and the Taliban—especially the Taliban—are making inroads and we, in his words, are not seeing the progress we want, that we are losing, basically, in Afghanistan?

Didn't he say to you and to Senator GRAHAM such that the important thing is that time is not on our side and we need to get troops over there as quickly as possible, in keeping with the strategy that was devised in March of this year and agreed to by the President? That was my understanding.

And Senator GRAHAM said: OK, now as to the civilians, I just got back from a visit. I appreciate all our civilians who are over there from different agencies. They are very brave, but, quite honestly, they can't go anywhere.

Admiral Mullen said: Right.

Senator GRAHAM said: You could send 10,000 lawyers from the State Department to deal with rural law programs, but they are sitting on the base because if they leave the base, they are going to get shot.

Admiral Mullen:

Right.

Then Graham said:

The only way to get off the base is if they have a military convoy, is that right?

Mullen said:

Right.

Senator GRAHAM said:

So I just want our colleagues to know the security environment in Afghanistan, from my point of view, will prevent any civilian success until we change the security environment. How long would it take to train enough Afghan troops to change the momentum, in your view, if we did it just with Afghan forces?

And he said:

Two or three years.

Then Senator GRAHAM said:

What will happen in that two or three year period in terms of the security environment while we are training.

Mullen said:

If it's just training?

GRAHAM said:

Yes.

Mullen said:

I think the security environment will continue to deteriorate.

I ask my friend, doesn't that lend urgency, which is certainly not apparent in the President's statement today? After meeting with the Canadian Prime Minister, basically saying he is going to go through a long process of evaluation and another strategy, claiming he didn't have one before. That is what is disturbing, is the total lack of urgency in the President's statement today.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Arizona, I was surprised and puzzled by that statement of the President today, particularly because the President, I think, has been very strong about Afghanistan. He has called Afghanistan a war of necessity—for the reason that I said,

because we cannot allow al-Qaida and the Taliban to come back into control. Forgive the analogy, but anymore than after World War II if the Nazis had somehow reassembled and attempted to retake control of part or all of Germany, we would have sat back? We simply cannot let that happen.

We also know if Afghanistan falls, if we accept defeat or for some reason retreat from Afghanistan, it will profoundly destabilize neighboring nuclear Pakistan and encourage the Islamist extremists throughout that region and the world.

My friend from Arizona is right. There is a sense of urgency that he and our colleague and friend from South Carolina, Senator GRAHAM, who is on the floor, saw when we visited with General McChrystal and Admiral Eikberry and the Afghan national security leadership a month ago. Admiral Mullen yesterday said we have lost the initiative in Afghanistan. It is why President Obama deployed the additional 21,000 troops in March and announced this new strategy.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator yield for one more question quickly?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I will be glad to.

Mr. MCCAIN. Isn't it true this is where the contradiction is? It is so paradoxical it is hard for me to comprehend. Admiral Mullen—in a question I said:

Admiral Mullen, didn't you say "time is not on your side"?

Admiral Mullen:

No, sir, I have a sense of urgency about this. I worry a great deal that the clock is moving very rapidly and there are lots of clocks, as you know. But the sense of urgency—and I, believe me, share that with General McChrystal who, while he is very focused on the change which includes partner-focus on the Afghan people, he is alarmed by the insurgency; he is in a position where he needs to retake the initiative from the insurgents who have grabbed over the last 3 years.

Then to contrast that with the President's statement today he said:

I am absolutely clear, you have to get the strategy right and then make determinations about resources. You don't make determinations about resources—certainly you don't make determinations about sending young men and women into battle without having absolute clarity about what the strategy is going to be.

He said:

My determination is to get this right and that means broad consultation not only inside the U.S. government but also our ISAP partners and our NATO allies, and I am going to take a very deliberate process in making these decisions.

I don't know what to make of that.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I think the statement by our top uniformed military officer, ADM Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reflects what General McChrystal and everybody on the ground in Afghanistan has said, this is an urgent matter. The President recognized that when he sent the 21,000 additional troops.

Most everybody in this Chamber and in the House will accept the fact that

it would have a devastating effect on America's national security and the security of the world if we lost Afghanistan. But then comes the question—incidentally, President Obama himself said this in a statement he made a while ago. He said we cannot muddle through in Afghanistan. It requires a decisive commitment to achieve victory.

We learned that in Iraq. Counterinsurgency, such as we are involved in in Afghanistan, is manpower intensive.

That is the question the administration and we here in Congress have. If you agree it is in the vital national security interests of the United States to succeed in Afghanistan, then you have to decide how we can best do that. To me the answer is clear. We need more troops there, American troops, while the Afghans are being trained to take over themselves. They cannot just be trainers. As Admiral Mullen made clear yesterday, they need to be combat troops. They need to be combat troops because, without the security that the American combat troops can singularly and uniquely provide in the short term, there cannot even be training of the Afghans. There certainly cannot be governance as we know it and there cannot be a prospect for economic development.

We need to make this decision soon. Weather has an effect.

Mr. GRAHAM. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I will yield to my friend from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. As I understood the situation, in the last couple of months casualties among American forces are at an all-time high since the invasion. Do you agree with that, I ask the Senator?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. That unfortunately is true.

Mr. GRAHAM. It is also my understanding that IED attacks by the enemy have gone up about 1,000 percent and in reaction to that, Secretary Gates has sent 3,000 people over to deal with the IED problem. From my understanding of the testimony yesterday, Admiral Mullen said the force structure we have in place, between the combination of coalition forces and Afghan forces, is not enough to reverse the trends and to regain lost momentum. I thought it was pretty clear that he was telling us something has to change beyond training the Afghan Army.

Would you agree that the longer we leave people in that environment, where the momentum is on the enemy's side, we are doing a great disservice to the 68,000 people who are there? And if you are going to send troops, send them while it matters, send them in enough number to save lives and get the job over sooner rather than later? That is what I think all three of us are saying.

Mr. President, we appreciate your commitment in Afghanistan. Sending troops to get the election conducted

was a wise move. Understanding that Afghanistan is the central battle in the overall war on terror now is a deep understanding on the President's part. The only thing we are saying, the three of us and I think others, is that our military commanders have told us we have lost momentum and the only way to get it back in the short term is more combat power, and every day that we wait makes it much harder for those who are in theatre, and they are dying at levels and being injured at levels we have not known before. That is what drives our thinking. Would you agree with that?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I am totally in agreement with my friend from South Carolina. This in fact is the lesson we should have learned and I think did learn in Iraq. When did the number of American casualties in Iraq begin to go down? It was when we sent more American troops there. Because the addition of American troops, and a new strategy—not just the numbers but a new strategy, a strategy quite similar to the new strategy we have in Afghanistan—protects the civilian population, gives them the confidence that we are not leaving. When you do that, something significant happens. It happened in Iraq and it will happen in Afghanistan. When we commit more troops, the people in the country decide we are not going to cut and run.

The Afghan people despise the Taliban. The progress the Taliban is making in controlling more land in Afghanistan is totally the result of violence and intimidation. The Afghan people, however, are watching us and wondering are we going to begin to pull back? Should they hedge their bets? Should they be careful not to join the fight against the Taliban?

If we begin to sound an uncertain trumpet—you remember that phrase from Scriptures: "If the sound of the trumpet is uncertain, who will follow into battle?" I will tell you one group that will not follow into battle if America begins to sound an uncertain trumpet in Afghanistan is the people of Afghanistan. We have a desire now that most everybody here shares. Let's break some of the Taliban away, the ones who are not zealots, the ones who, in a sense are foot soldiers, followers. They are the comparable group to the Sons of Iraq in Anbar Province. But when did the Sons of Iraq decide they were going to turn against al-Qaida? When we convinced them we were going to stay in Anbar and protect them.

In fact, how did we convince them? By sending more troops. It was after that the Iraqi security forces grew in capability, that the American casualties went down.

I would say to my friend, he has touched a very important point here. The only way we will reduce American casualties, which are now going up, and create an environment in which more Afghans will join the war against the Taliban and al-Qaida is for us to give

them the confidence we are not going to leave. The best way we can do that and provide the security to do that is by sending more troops.

Incidentally, a final word and then I will yield to my friend from South Carolina. There are those, including my dear friend and respected chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator LEVIN, who are focused on sending more Americans only for training purposes, not combat troops. But here is something else we learned in Iraq. The fact is you need more than trainers to train the indigenous forces. One of the great tactical breakthroughs in Iraq that General McChrystal wants to put into effect in fact has begun in Afghanistan: There is no better way to train the Afghan forces than to partner them with American and coalition forces in Afghanistan. It is not just sending somebody to a school run by Americans to train them; it is having the Afghan units out there in the field, side by side, working with, fighting with, living with American soldiers that is the best source of training.

I couldn't agree with my friends from South Carolina and Arizona more. The situation in Afghanistan is a vital national interest. Everybody agrees with that. You can't listen to ADM Mike Mullen yesterday and decide the initiative is ours now. It is not. It is slipping away from us. The best way to regain the initiative is to send as many troops as we can. Listening to General McChrystal, a lot of them have to be combat troops, and to do so as quickly as possible.

I said "the weather" a moment ago. The winters are harsh in Afghanistan. That is not to say all conflict stops, but there is a fighting season in Afghanistan. This year, we did not have adequate forces there until the new wave the President, President Obama, deployed got there. They didn't get there until June. We were together in Helmut Province with GEN Larry Nickelson, an extraordinary Marine general, a patriot, great soldier, great fighter, great leader. Those Marines are turning back the tide against the Taliban there because they have the numbers.

And that is exactly what we have to do throughout the country. I thank my friend. I am glad to yield the floor to him at this time.

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. I would like to pick up where my colleague, Senator LIEBERMAN, left off. The question to ask is, how did the Taliban regain momentum? How do a bunch of fighters, who do not have one airplane, no navy, no heavy weapons to speak of, how could they have regained momentum and begun to reoccupy parts of Afghanistan?

The only answer I can come up with is a vacuum has been created. That

vacuum has two components to it: the lack of governance and not enough troops to prevent the Taliban from coming back in some areas of Afghanistan.

I would submit this: If we wait to train the Afghan Army as the only way to stabilize Afghanistan, we are going to waste 2 or 3 years. It is going to get so bad we cannot stand the casualties, and the American people will not tolerate a 2- or 3-year period of where we are just training the Afghan forces, sending them from the training cycle into combat. They are going to fold, just like they did in Iraq. We cannot train an army and have them fight at the same time. We need a little bit of breathing space.

So this idea that we are going to train the Afghan Army, that is the way we will regain momentum against the Taliban, quite frankly will not work. I think Admiral Mullen understood that. What will work is to send more combat power to clear the Taliban from the areas that the Taliban have reoccupied. The Marines are telling us in no uncertain terms, with the right mix of troops they are delivering punishing blows to the Taliban. But we can send 1 million troops to Afghan and still not deal with the fundamental problems they face and the world faces, the legitimacy of the Afghan Government in the eyes of the Afghan people. That is why the Taliban have come back because the Afghan Government has failed. They have failed in almost every respect to give the Afghan people the governance and the hope they need to stand up to the Taliban.

So this is one Senator who believes the way to regain lost momentum is to add more combat power and, yes, train the Afghan Army and police force with a new strategy which we now have in place.

It is labor intensive. It is going to take a lot of time. We have to understand, if we get the Afghan Army up to 400,000, the whole budget of Afghanistan is \$800 million a year. It will take \$5 billion a year to maintain that army. We are going to end up paying. I hope the American taxpayer understands that. But it is cheaper for us to do that than it is for us to be the 400,000-person army.

So when it comes to cost, it is better to train them and help them with their training and funding than it is for us to stay over there in large numbers forever. But we are going to have to plus up to regain lost momentum. Then we are going to have to focus on the real cause of the deterioration—governance.

The Karzai government has failed in many ways. Corruption is rampant. If, in the next 6 months, some major figures in Afghanistan are not prosecuted for ripping off the Afghan people, then nothing will ever change over there.

I have been a military lawyer serving as a reservist in Afghanistan. I can tell you that everyone who has looked at the Rule of Law Programs will tell you that corruption, narcotics corruption,

is rampant in that country. They need a legal system in Afghanistan that can stand up to the corruption. That means we have to protect the judges from being assassinated; we have to build capacity.

There are less than 500 lawyers in all of Afghanistan. There are 16,000 people in jail. Most of them went to jail without ever seeing a lawyer. We have our work cut out for us. We need benchmarks and measurements so I can go back to South Carolina and every Senator can go back to their constituents and say: We are not throwing good money after bad. We are going to push the Afghan Government to prosecute corruption, to provide security for judges, to find a way to empower the economy beyond the drug trade, and start making hard decisions about how tribal justice systems can be incorporated into the formal justice system.

There are so many decisions that politicians in Afghanistan have failed to make that have allowed the Taliban to come back. We need to put them on notice that with new resources and new troops, a new dynamic will be in place, and they will be making the decisions necessary to provide governance to their people. If they fail to do that, then they will not have our support because, at the end of the day, they have to want it more than we do.

Senator LIEBERMAN is right about this. The good news amidst all of this bad news is the Taliban is very much reviled and hated in the country. But put yourselves in one of these villages out in the middle of Afghanistan. What would you do, knowing that by night the Taliban comes in and rains terror? We have to replace that dynamic and give the people assurance that we are not only going to provide them security but the Afghan Government is going to provide them schooling and education, health care, and some hope.

Finally, I cannot tell you that we will succeed with more troops. I can tell you, we will fail if we do not send more troops. It is so much harder in Afghanistan than in many ways it is in Iraq. We are not the Russians. We are not the British. This is not Vietnam. This is not Iraq.

This is Afghanistan where 9/11 was planned and executed. We can get this right.

Mr. MCCAIN. Would the Senator yield so I can ask a question? I see we have one of our colleagues waiting to speak.

I wonder what the Senator thinks. We held a hearing yesterday with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is highly regarded. He conveys to every questioner, no matter which Member it is, a sense of urgency because of his belief and that of our military commanders on the ground that we are not winning.

In fact, in the words of Admiral Mullen: Time is not on our side.

Yet today, the President of the United States came out, after meeting with the Canadian Prime Minister, and

basically said he is—after his spokesperson said he is going to take weeks and weeks to make a decision, he came out and basically said there is not a sense of urgency; that the strategy that was developed in March was not the operative strategy, even though Admiral Mullen said the March strategy was the operative strategy, and all we need to do is fill in the resources and the strategy.

My question to my friend from South Carolina is, how do you account for this apparent contradiction or difference in view about the sense of urgency that exists in the conflict in Afghanistan?

Mr. GRAHAM. Well, the one thing I can tell you is Admiral Mullen is going to be reappointed with probably every person in this body voting for him because he has gained our trust, and it speaks well of the President that he would renominate him. So he has obviously gained the President's trust.

I am not a military commander. But I do not have to be much of a military expert to understand his testimony. His testimony was pretty clear: We have lost momentum. The Taliban is reemerging, stronger than ever, and the capability of the coalition forces and the Afghan Army and security forces combined cannot reverse the momentum. Something new has to happen.

When we put on the table training the Afghan Army without additional combat power, how long would it take before they could have enough numbers to change things? Two or three years.

What would happen during that training period? It would deteriorate further.

What did he tell us? The pathway forward is that we have a new strategy, it needs to be properly resourced. I think what he was telling us more than anything else is that time is not on our side. Casualties in July and August were at an all-time high. We have 68,000 people wearing our uniform in Afghanistan who are getting killed in larger numbers than ever, and the dynamic on the ground will not change the momentum. To do nothing puts them in an environment where they are going to get killed in higher numbers, and what Admiral Mullen is telling us, and I hope the President will listen, is that time is not on our side, but, more importantly, it is not on their side.

This decision about troops, to me, is pretty easy. We need more, but troops alone will not fix Afghanistan. But without more troops in a hurry and with a sense of urgency, we are going to let the Taliban get stronger, the Afghan people are going to get weaker in their resolve, and more Americans are going to die than if we had more troops.

That is what I got out of the hearing. I hope the President is listening.

Mr. MCCAIN. Again, I also would ask my colleague, have we forgotten the lessons of history? We were there and we assisted the Afghans in driving out

the Russians. Our assistance was critical. The Russians left and we left.

When we left, it left a vacuum that ended up with the fighting between warlords, and the Taliban filled the vacuum, the Taliban had an arrangement with al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden, and the terrorists who attacked us on 9/11—which we just commemorated—were able to be trained in Afghanistan.

I hope our memories are not so short that we are willing to risk a repetition of that kind of threat, which the President, during the campaign, seemed to recognize very accurately; called it the “good war.” He said it “was a war we had to win,” “do what is necessary to win.”

Now I worry—I wonder if my colleague does—that every day we delay doing what we all know is necessary puts the lives of young Americans who are already there at risk and makes it a longer period of time before we can prevail.

Mr. GRAHAM. The last thought about that: I think our memory, the event that we need to remember is even later than 9/11. It is actually in Iraq. I remember very well this whole debate, and I would urge this administration not to do what the last administration did. That is exactly what is going on in Afghanistan right now. It is as if we have learned nothing.

It is clear, just as it was in Iraq, that we did not have enough combat power to secure the country, not enough mentoring programs to actually train the Iraqi Army, and only when we changed the strategy of adding more troops and gave the Iraqi people and the army some breathing space, the politicians, from the violence did things change. It is exactly the same thing here.

But right now we have a dynamic on the ground that is not much different from Iraq the first 3 years after the fall of Saddam Hussein. It is clear that Admiral Mullen recognizes that. The new strategy in March is a counterinsurgency strategy, and Senator MCCAIN, the one thing I remember is numbers matter. We need enough troops per population center to effect change, and we do not have the ratios to enact an effective counterinsurgency strategy unless we add more troops, and that means more than just trainers.

So my frustration is, as you said yesterday: We have seen this movie before. We are putting 68,000 troops in harm's way, and unless we properly resource them, give them more assistance, more people to help them fight, they are not going to change the battle momentum, and they are going to get killed in the process.

There is not enough people to effect the counterinsurgency strategy, just like there was not enough in Iraq. Have we learned nothing? So let's act.

Mr. President, we will support you to the nth degree to get the combat power and the trainers and the civilians into Afghanistan to turn this place around. But the sooner you act, the quicker we

can do it, and the sooner we will come home and the less lives we will lose in the long run. That is our message.

We respect you. You are the Commander in Chief. You won the election. But you have an opportunity, and it is clear to me that we are losing momentum. This is not a time to deliberate. This is a time to act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak about three amendments to the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. I do wish to comment on the Afghan discussion and thank my colleagues who just spoke so eloquently. All three have been leaders on the issue of international engagements. I hope the Senators, particularly Senator McCAIN and Senator GRAHAM, as we contemplate the right moves forward, will think about and be willing to fund nonmilitary programs as well. Many such programs have been shown, in front of the Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee, through testimony given by Secretary Gates himself, as well as many military leaders, to actually help reduce violence by supporting development in Afghan villages, empowering individuals, particularly women in Afghanistan who, with a little bit of help and a little bit of support, can be the strength and cement that holds communities together. Educating girls is an important strategy.

One thing we have learned from the failed policies of the previous administration is that we have to use both hard and soft power combined, to make it smarter so we can actually win some of these battles. That is probably what President Obama and his team are thinking about: How do we unite the Congress, get past partisan rhetoric, and come up with a smart strategy to win in Afghanistan. In that way we might not only protect our troops, but we might be able to get them home a little bit sooner. I am sure that is what the President is thinking about. I look forward to working with Senators Lieberman, McCain, and Graham as we move forward, hopefully, in a bipartisan fashion, to protect our troops and to win in a place that we most certainly need to and keep the Taliban at bay.

I came to talk about three amendments. One is an amendment I have pending. It is amendment No. 2365. I see my colleague, Senator HUTCHISON, is in the Chamber. She is a cosponsor of the amendment. Although we are not going to vote on it tonight, I wished to speak for a moment about the amendment. Unfortunately, I will be away from the Senate tomorrow for a longstanding commitment. Tomorrow I will deliver a speech that I promised to give on behalf of Senator Domenici in New Mexico, so I will not

be here for the vote. But I know my colleagues who are supporting this amendment will stand in and carry the torch.

My amendment will help disaster-stricken communities in Texas, Louisiana, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Florida and California. Congress appropriated \$6.5 billion in a Community Development Block Grant for the series of disasters that afflicted these states in 2008. The problem was, that in this particular allocation, we prohibited these communities from using that money to match other Federal moneys that might be available, which makes no sense. Congress has appropriated funds using the Community Development Block Grant to respond to 19 other disasters, and virtually never resorted to adding such a prohibition.

What my amendment will do is revert to the regular language so that communities, such as Galveston—I see my colleague Senator HUTCHISON here. She and I will be together in Galveston on Friday to monitor recovery efforts there and she has been such a leader in this effort. However, there are still many communities in New Orleans and in southwest Louisiana and other parts of south Louisiana for which this amendment is crucial. It doesn't add money to the bill. It just allows us to use money more intelligently.

For communities that are struggling not just because of disasters but because of the atmosphere of tough economic times, it gives local and State leaders a little bit more flexibility to pull down some of the Federal money that has already been allocated to communities that need it the most. It is amendment No. 2365. Senator GRASSLEY is supportive, as are Senator MURRAY and Senator BOND. I thank them so much. We will consider that amendment tomorrow.

Now I want to turn to a new topic and I wish to speak against an amendment offered by my colleague from Louisiana, Senator VITTER, that will be considered tomorrow. I will not be here to vote against this amendment but will submit a statement for the RECORD. I strongly oppose that amendment—amendment number 2359, which will be voted on tomorrow.

This is an amendment I oppose for two reasons. No. 1, it is bad policy. The other reason I am against it is because this amendment only deals with public housing residents and other HUD-housing assistance recipients in the city of New Orleans. It doesn't address the problems of public housing residents right here in the District of Columbia, nor public housing residents in Chicago or New York, nor Baton Rouge, nor Lafayette. Only in New Orleans.

That is perplexing to me, that it is focused on only one city in our State and only one city in the whole country. That is one reason to vote against the amendment, no matter what it says, because it does not include other communities.

But the real reason to vote against the amendment is because it is mean-spirited and counterproductive. What this amendment basically says is that you can be evicted from public housing if anyone in your family commits a crime or gets in trouble with the law.

I understand family members. I am one of nine siblings. I am married and now have two children. I have many brothers and sisters and 38 cousins in our extended family and two wonderful parents. The Presiding Officer has met many members of my family. I like to try to take responsibility for everyone in my family. But parents, no matter how hard they try, sometimes somebody in your family does something that is wrong. Should the entire family become homeless? That is what the Vitter amendment will do. It is such poor policy. It is so mean-spirited. It is so counterproductive. It will mean an increase in homelessness for a city that has already seen our homeless population quadruple.

More than that, the nature of this amendment is so punitive. It penalizes grandmothers or great aunts or moms and dads, or siblings who are trying to do the best they can with very little. Children sometimes do very bad things. Sometimes you will have a family of five children. Four are wonderful and straight-A students. Then you have one child who gets in trouble with drugs or becomes an alcoholic, and causes trouble for the family. Senator VITTER has put in an amendment which he will ask this body to support that would do this: when one member of the family gets in trouble with the law, the whole family gets thrown out on the street.

If this amendment passes, I would like for him to have to go to the sister in fourth grade, because, let's say, the teenage son who is 17 is the one who is causing the problems. I don't want people to think I just pick on boys, but I think people understand we have lots of trouble with this age group of all genders. I would like maybe for my colleague to be the one who has to knock on the front door and tell the mother and the fourth grade little girl, who got an A on her test, performed in the band and has straight A's, that she can pack her bags and spend the night on the street. If I could modify this amendment to make him have to do that, I would. This is not compassionate conservatism. This is mean, and it is nonsense. It needs to be voted down.

To repeat the number, for my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, it is amendment No. 2359, only for New Orleans and only for people in public housing. I hope Members will vote no.

Let me say one other thing about this. Unfortunately, my colleague and some people supported tearing down all the public housing units in New Orleans after the storm because some of them were destroyed. Some people took this as an opportunity to say: We never liked them anyway. They